



Hiawatha First Nation

June 3, 2025

Premier Doug Ford
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Minister Rickford
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Minister Stephen Lecce
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Open Letter on Bill 5: “Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025”

Aaniin Premier Ford, Minister’s Rickford and Lecce,

Atik Dodem, Aajijak Dodem, Mgizi Kwe Ndishnikaz, Laurie Nooswin, Minoomingaming (Hiawatha) Ndoonjaba, Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe Ndaaw, Gimaa Hiawatha. I am from the Hoof Clan, relation to the Crane Clan, my Anishinaabe name is Eagle Woman, my English name is Laurie and I am Citizen of the Mississauga Nation, and Chief of our First Nation, Hiawatha.

I write this letter on behalf on my First Nation and our Citizens in respect to our protected Constitutional Treaty Rights, the environment and democratic accountabilities. Bill 5 infringes on First Nations rights, undermines environmental protections and uses regulatory powers to evade democratic accountability to the People.

Hiawatha First Nation unquestionably opposes this legislation.

As you are aware, there are Supreme Court decisions, such as, *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* that reinforce the duty to consult and accommodate First Nations before decisions are made that could impact our rights and/or territories.

Calls 43 and 44, from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, calls upon governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework for Reconciliation. UNDRIP affirms the right of First Nations to Free, Prior and Informed Consent on matters affecting our Rights, Lands, Waters and Resources.

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“We, the Mississaugi of Hiawatha First Nation, are a vibrant, proud, independent and healthy people balanced in the richness of our culture and traditional way of life.”



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Further, Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of First Nations. Any legislation that diminishes these rights is unconstitutional. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada has adopted and the federal government has recognized in law, also affirms the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

Ontario's Bill 5 fails to uphold these principles and obligations.

This Bill puts our environment at risk with the creation of "Special Economic Zones" which repeals key environmental protections. First Nations Peoples have a responsibility to protect the Lands, Waters and Air for the life of our future generations. This is not just the life of First Nations future, but for the future Children of all Peoples who live in Ontario and across Turtle Island (Canada).

Bill 5's approach threatens the environment and the balance of natural ecosystems.

There is still time for the Government of Ontario to do the right thing, to honour the Treaties and our Rights protected under the Constitution. Hiawatha First Nation calls upon the Government of Ontario to immediately withdraw Bill 5. Any new legislation must be subject to vigorous consultation and include enforceable protections for Inherent and Treaty Rights.

Hiawatha stands strong in opposition to any legislative efforts that diminish the Rights of our First Nations, threatens the environment we ALL depend on and evades democratic accountabilities to ALL Peoples in Ontario. Hiawatha stands strong, and will support our Sister First Nations, and all our Brothers and Sisters against threats to our Lands.

Our Rights are NOT for sale!

Miigwetch,

Chief Laurie Carr

On behalf of Hiawatha Council and First Nation